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NICARAGUA/U.S.
AID

HUNTER-GAULT: Reagan administration efforts to gain emergency aid for the CIA-backed Nicaraguan rebels was blocked today by the Republican-controlled Senate Appropriations Committee. The \$21 million aid request was defeated on a 14-to, 15-to, excuse me, to-14 vote. Members of the committee complained about both the administration's call for emergency aid and its legislative tactics, that is, tacking the military aid to a bill on energy assistance for low-income citizens. SEN. TED STEVENS (R-Alaska): Gentlemen, there's no alternative. It takes more than two months for money to get into a pipeline for covert activities. Now, you must decide today whether that's going to be continued, because they're, there are people that are in, just as much in need of a, a decision as those who are affected by low-income, uh, energy problems, and I... Four of us have just returned from Central America where, where we visited these, the installations in Honduras, and we visited with some of the people that were involved in the covert activities. And I can tell you now that if we do not act before May, there will be a very dangerous hiatus as far as Central America is concerned. SEN. MARK HATFIELD (R-Ore.): Low-income energy fuel assistance recipients are hurting today. I would venture that if you add this amendment, even if we were able to conclude this meeting today, and I doubt if we could even conclude it today, you're going to find it literally weeks before you get any action through this Congress to help those people who are already hurting today. Now, that's the alternative. You either are going to, you're either going to further the Central American political, military policies of this administration on the backs of the people who are already poor and hurting, or you're going to give them some relief within a reasonable few days.